(d) and (e) Disciplinary action was initiated. During the Years 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96, 117, 210 and 185 officials, respectively were punished.

Running of Jabalpur-Bhopal Intercity Train

6400. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE: Will the Ministry of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware about the demands of members of Rail Consumers Advisory Committee Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh regarding the introduction of Jabalpur-Bhopal Intercity train, running of Jabalpur-Delhi Mahamaya train with full bogies and suitable timings of trains for passengers.

(b) is so, whether the Government propose to take any action in this regard; and

(c) if so, the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) Demands for introudction of a train between Jabalpur-Bhopal, running of Jabalpur-Nizamuddin Gondwana Express with full load and re-scheduling of Gondwana Express have been examined but have not been found feasible due to operational and resource constraints. Besides, Jabalpur-Nizamuddin Gondwana Express is running with full load between Bina and Nizamuddin.

[English]

New Mineral Exploration Policy

6401. SHRI K. PRADHANI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce a new mineral exploration policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which this policy is likely to be announced?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) The policy prescription for exploration of minerals is covered under the National Mineral Policy, 1993. There is no proposal to introduce a separate new mineral exploration policy.

Forfeiture of Bank Guarantees

6402. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the privatisation of basic telephone services suffered a severe set back as the Communications Ministry revoked letters of Intent and also forfeiture of bank guarantees of Essar group of companies;

(b) if so, whether from out of 13 companies that have licence so far in the field of basic telephone are now in jeopardise;

(c) whether the Tara and DoT is already involved in litigation with the controversial Himachal Futuristic Co. Ltd.; and

(d) if so, steps the Government propose to take to revive their licences?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) As against 12 Letters of Intent (LOIs) issued to 8 companies for providing telephone service in 12 Telecom Circles, 2 companies viz. M/s Bharti Telenet and M/s Reliance Telecom., after payment of first year's lincence fee, have signed the Lincenes for Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat Circles respectively. 2 companies holding 3 LOIs have yet to complete formalities and deposit licence fee for conversion of their LOIs into Licenes. Remaining 4 companies holding 7 LOIs (including M/s Essar Group holding LOI for Punjab Circle) have filed Civil Suits in the High Court of Dehhi against Government's order for forfeiture of their Earnest Money Bank Guarantees due to their failure to comply with tender provisions. Their cases are sub-judice. Government, however, has made appropriate efforts to resolve a number of issues raised by them to facilitate successful implementation of these projects.

(c) M/s HFCL Bezeq Telecom Ltd., the LOI holding company for Delhi, Haryana, UP (West) and Orissa, has filed Civil Suit in the High Court of Delhi against the Government's action to invoke their Earnest Money Bank Guarantee due to their Non-compliance of tender provisions. Further, Government is not aware of any litigation between M/s Tata and M/s Himachal Futuristic Co. Ltd., the two private sector companies.

(d) The cases are sub-judice in the High Court of Delhi.

[Translation]

Loan to Educated Unemployed Youth for Starting Hotels

6403. DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR:

SHRI DEVI BOX SINGH:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government provide loans on concessional rates to educated unemployed youth of hilly region of Uttaranchal of Uttar Pradesh for starting hotels etc. at tourist spots;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the criteria being followed to identify the beneficiaries; and

(d) the number of such youth in the Tehri Garhwal and Uttarkashi districts provided loan under the said scheme during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (d) No, Sir. The Government of India does not provide any special concessional loans to educated unemployed youths of hilly region of Uttaranchal of Uttar Pradesh for starting hotels etc. at tourist spots. However, the Department of Tourism has a scheme of giving interest subsidy to those entrepreneurs who wish to invest in hotel projects of one, two and three star approved projects at the rate of 3% discount on interest on loans taken from selected financial institutions. In the travel circuit of Rishikesh-Narendernagar-Gangotri-Badrinath the interest subsidy is higher i.e. 5%. The Government also gives income tax benefit to investment in hotels located in hilly areas.

[English]

Modernisation of Air Traffic Services

6404. SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high level team of officials of the US-Air-Service Company, Raytheon, led by its Vice-President (Transport) Mike Hoeffler, recently visited India for discussion on the Airport project as part of modernisation of Air-traffic services at Bombay and Delhi (MATSBD);

(b) if so, the details of MATSBD project indicating various stages of the project; and

(c) the outcome of the talks with the team?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Under this modernisation project, the complete air traffic control at Delhi and Mumbai airports is being automated with the provision of Flight Data Processing System, Radar Data Processing System, Automatic Self Briefing System and Voice Control Communication System. In addition, the state-of-the-art Radars, including Airport Surviellance Radar, Air Route Surveillance Radar, Monopulse Secondary Surveillance Radar with Mode-S capability and Airfield Surface Detection Equipment are also provided. Site acceptance tests of these systems are in progress in a phased manner. The test on integrated system of Air Traffic Services is expected to be completed by May, 1997 at Delhi and June, 1997 at Mumbai. The total cost of the project is Rs. 423.89 crores, and includes a foreign exchange components of Rs. 266.48 crores.

(c) In the talks, the bottlenecks for the smooth implementation of the project were identified and milestones fixed for the speedy implementation of the project so that there are no further slippages in the project schedule.

Area of Hyderabad-Secunderabad for Local Dialing

6405. SHRI P.V. RAJESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the area within which local telephone calls can be done in Hyderbad and Secunderabad in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether the Government proposes to extend area limits for local telephone calls in Hyderabad and Secunderabad as is the system in Delhi;

(c) if so, the names of places to which local telephone calls facility is proposed to be provided in Hyderabad and Secunderabad alongwith the time by which the facility is likely to be made available; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not extending the area limits for local telephone calls in Hyderabad and Secunderabad?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Local Call facility is available to the telephone subscribers situated within the area under the jurisdiction of Municipal Corporation of the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad and Secunderabad Cantonment Board.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) As per existing policy, Local Area of a multi-exchange system covers the area under the jurisdiction of Municipal Committee/Corporation. Metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai have been given special dispensation.

[Translation]

Occupation of Seats of Coolies

6406. SHRI PAWAN DIWAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that coolies occupy seats in the unreserved coaches at railway stations and extort money from passengers in exchange of seats;

(b) if so, the railway stations from which such complaints have been received and the number of such complaints; and

(c) the action taken by the Government against those coolies involved in such activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Some such instances have come to notice.

(b) During January to December, 1996, 33 complaints were received against the licensed porters of Mumbai CST, Dadar Terminus, Kalyan, Kurla Terminus, Pune, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, New Jalpaiguri, Chennai Central, Howrah, Mumbai Central and Bandra Terminus.

(c) Regular checks are conducted by the railways to curb such activities by the coolies. Licence badges of licensed porters found indulging in malpractices were suspended/terminated wherever the charges were substantiated.